

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2003

Chair Mathewson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present, Commissioners: Mathewson, Gibson, Feierbach, Frautschi, Parsons

Absent, Commissioners: Torre (arrived 7:04), Wiecha (arrived 7:06)

Present, Staff: Community Development Director Ewing (CDD), Associate Planner Swan (AP), Contract Planner Schimpp (CP), City Attorney Savaree (CA), Recording Secretary Szabó (RS)

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS:

CDD Ewing stated that item 4B, Minutes for 1-7-03, would be presented to the Commission at the February 18, 2003 Commission Meeting.

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments):

George Meding addressed the Commission regarding the project on 1233 Lane. He began by thanking CDD Ewing and Principal Planner de Melo, stating that both were very helpful to him.

Mr. Meding stated that 12 homes would be adversely affected by the addition to 1233 Lane. He asked that all Commissioners visit the project site. He stated further that 2 weeks from today, a group of neighbors living around the project site would be in attendance to speak before the Commission on this subject. He continued to state that he expected the City of Belmont to ensure that the plans which were approved by the Commission for this project be followed exactly, with no deviations.

Mr. Meding stated again that he believed that the Public Hearing notices that were originally sent out by the City were lost. He added that at the next Commission Meeting, he, and all attending neighbors, would present the Commission with a petition voicing their disapproval of the project.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR:

4A. Minutes 12/17/02

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, second by Commissioner Torre to approve the Minutes of 12/17/02, as corrected.

Motion passed 7/0

4C. Resolution to Deny a Variance and Design Review for Extended Stay America, 120 Sem Lane - Consistent with Action Taken by the Planning Commission on January 21, 2003.

J.R. Rodine, representing Extended Stay America, addressed the Commission. He briefly stated that he is asking the Commission to vote "without prejudice", so that in the event the Council asks staff and the Commission to change the signage regulations for highway commercial use, Extended Stay of America

would not be barred from coming back within the period of a year in order to be able to do retrofit work, should the regulations change.

CA Savaree asked if C Feierbach was moving the resolution that was in the Commissioners' packets.

C Feierbach said yes.

C Parsons asked if it was allowable to change ones vote at this point.

CA Savaree answered that until a final action is taken, he has the option of taking whatever position he would like to, on the matter.

Chair Mathewson asked CA Savaree if these votes are taken with, or without prejudice.

CA Savaree explained that if the City's Ordinances were changed in regard to signs, applicants who had a project denied within the last year could conform with a new application, even though it may not have been a year since their denial because there would be a new set of regulations in place.

MOTION: By Commissioner Feierbach, second by Commissioner Frautschi, to deny a Variance and Design Review at 120 Sem Lane, Belmont.

Ayes: Feierbach, Frautschi, Parsons, Mathewson

Noes: Gibson, Torre

Abstain: Wiecha

Chair Mathewson announced this item could be appealed within 10 days.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

5A. PUBLIC HEARING – 3313 HASKINS DRIVE

To Consider a Floor Area Exception for an existing 2,954 square foot single-family residence. The proposed addition would be within the existing building envelope and includes conversion of ground floor crawlspace into habitable floor area. (App. No PA2002-0057)

C Feierbach stated that she lives within 500 feet of the subject property and would be removing herself from the room.

AP Swan Summarized the staff report which recommended denial of the Floor Area Exception as it would result in the second highest floor area exception of the surrounding 21 properties surveyed, and its approval would be a grant of special privilege.

C Gibson asked staff for clarification of the term "grant of special privilege" in the purpose section as applied to this particular submission.

CDD Ewing explained that in this case, the grant of special privilege denoted the allowance of "too much". He added that the floor area exception is supposed to be providing relief when there is inconsistency where there is too little floor area allowed by the rules. CDD Ewing continued to say that there is a point where so much floor area is granted; it becomes a special privilege above and beyond what other owners would receive.

The applicant, Craig Reynolds introduced his architect, Fred Strathdee, and his Contractor, Eric Somers, to the Commissioners.

Fred Strathdee presented the project to the Commission. He explained the plans to convert ground floor crawlspace into habitable floor area within the existing building envelope.

Eric Somers took the podium and stated that he felt although staff believes that the addition is incompatible with other existing residences, he feels that it is compatible, as there will be no visible alterations to the exterior of the building.

The following neighbors residing in close proximity of the subject site all came before the Commission to express their support for the project:

Lisa Perey of 3213 Longfellow, Bob Reiber of 3211 Longfellow, Warner Baker of 3215 Longfellow, Rob Chang of 3314 Haskins, and Grace Lee of 3314 Haskins.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, second by Commissioner Frautschi, to close the Public Hearing. Motion Passed.

C Gibson stated that although the exception would increase inconsistencies, it did not rise to the level of a special privilege, so he would support the project.

VC Wiecha stated that after reviewing the entire submission, she did not feel that a "special privilege" was being granted. She also noted that the applicant had made an excellent effort regarding the Neighborhood Outreach Program.

Chair Mathewson voiced his concern about the project setting a precedent for potentially significant intensity over time, which he felt could create problems in terms of parking issues.

C Parsons stated that his interpretation of the ordinance led him to believe that this was a grant of special privilege, and he would therefore have to vote against the project.

MOTION: By Commissioner Gibson, second by VC Wiecha, approving Floor Area Exception at 3313 Haskins Drive and to direct staff to bring back a resolution reflecting the findings in support of the granting of the exception.

Ayes: Gibson, Wiecha, Frautschi, Torre

Noes: Parson, Mathewson

Recuse: Feierbach

5B. PUBLIC HEARING – 705 ALAMEDA DE LAS PULGAS

To consider a Single Family Design Review and Tree Removal Permit to remodel and build new additions to the existing 1,828 square foot residence for a total of 3,472 square feet that is below the zoning district permitted 3,500 square feet.

CP Schimpp presented the staff report to the Commission recommending approval of the project with the conditions of the arborist report.

C Gibson asked if any special measures would need to be taken to protect the creek behind the project site.

CP Schimpp replied that there were erosion and tree protection measures that would be taken, and that these measures were included in the conditions of approval.

CDD Ewing added that the conditions of approval had a number of provisions for minimizing storm water run-off into the creek, during and after construction.

Chair Mathewson asked if the applicant wished to speak. She declined, stating that CP Schimpp had addressed all points that she wished to discuss.

Kathy Vallor of 2034 Arbor spoke before the Commission stating that she had some concerns about the tree removal and ground slippage, but after hearing the presentation, she felt comfortable with the project.

MOTION: By Commissioner Wiecha , second by Commissioner Torre, to close the Public Hearing. Motion Passed.

MOTION: By Commissioner Wiecha, second by Commissioner Torre, to approve a Single Family Design Review and Tree Removal Permit at 705 Alameda de las Pulgas.

Ayes: Wiecha, Torre, Frautschi, Feierbach, Gibson, Parson, Mathewson

Noes: None

Chair Mathewson announced that this item could be appealed within 10 days.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6A. City Council Priority Calendar

CDD Ewing provided the Commission with the final tally of new projects that the Planning Commission voted on at the previous Commission meeting. He also presented the Commission with the City Council's priority status report. He continued by asking the Commission if there was anything that they wished to move up on the priority list, he would be happy to forward their comments to the City Council.

There was a consensus by the Commission to move item number A., Conceptual Review/ Preliminary Review Procedures, up to the number one position on the Priority Calendar. This would replace the current number one item, Parking Standards Update.

C Frautschi stated that he thought having the parking issue as number 1 on the priority list, was a good idea. He added that he has noticed that the parking situation in Belmont was beginning to affect the quality of life in the City, and was therefore an issue that should be seriously considered.

7. REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

Chair Mathewson asked that in the future, staff reports that recommend denial do not need to include additional verbiage regarding alternatives as they are already listed under action alternatives in the staff report.

CDD Ewing asked that the Commission mark their calendars for March 15, 2003 for the Economic Development Leadership Forum that will be hosted by CalEd. He added that invitations for the Forum would be mailed soon.

8. PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON TO CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY,

Liaison: Commissioner Parsons

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Torre

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. to a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 18, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP

Planning Commission Secretary

Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for review

in the Community Development Department

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.